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Interethnic Relations in a Changing Political Context*

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The aim of this study was to examine evaluations of multiple groups by both ethnic majority-group (Dutch) and minority-group (Turkish-Dutch) members during a turbulent political period in the Netherlands, marked by the rapid rise and subsequent decline of a new-rightist, populist movement. The analysis of cross-sectional data from three periods (2001 to 2003) showed clear changes in these evaluations. As expected, both the Dutch and the Turkish participants showed higher ingroup identification and ingroup evaluation in 2002 than in 2001 and 2003. In addition, in 2002 the Dutch participants evaluated the Islamic outgroups (Turks and Moroccans) more negatively, whereas their evaluation of other ethnic minority groups did not differ across the three years. In contrast, Turkish participants evaluated all ethnic outgroups, including the Dutch and the Moroccans, more negatively in 2002. We conclude that it is important to study ethnic relations across time, in relation to political circumstances, from the perspective of both majority- and minority-group members, and in relation to different ethnic outgroups.

Many countries around the world are multi ethnic. Therefore, real-life intergroup relations involve an array of groups that differ in ethnic background and in which ethnicity or related characteristics such as race, language, and religion are criteria for group status. Most theoretical discussions and empirical investigations in the domain of intergroup evaluations tend to ignore these complex considerations and focus instead on dyadic ingroup-outgroup relations (see Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis 2002). In Europe, for example, the emphasis is on majority members' attitudes about immigrants and ethnic minorities (e.g., Jackson, Brown, and Kirby 1998; McLaren 2003; Quillian 1995). Furthermore, in addition to examining evaluations of multiple groups, it is necessary to study the attitudes of ethnic minority-group members because they are important in attaining true interethnic harmony in society.

Another characteristic of existing intergroup research is that the main focus is on

evaluations in relation to the current situation (see Brewer and Miller 1996; Brown 1999). Most studies examine people's intergroup responses in experimental settings or their evaluation of current in- and outgroup issues. In general, the potential importance of political, economic, and social changes is acknowledged, but this has not led to many analyses of intergroup evaluations over time (see Oakes, Haslam, and Turner 1994). It seems obvious that intergroup relations are influenced by social and political developments. It is not clear, however, how these developments affect majority- and minority-group members' evaluations of various ethnic groups.

In the present study we seek to address these two limitations of previous research. In 2001–2003, using a cross-sectional design with three measuring points, we examined the extent to which ethnically Dutch and Turkish-Dutch participants evaluated different ethnic groups positively or negatively. In the Netherlands, this period was marked by dramatic political changes involving the rise and subsequent murder of a new-rightist, populist politician who gave priority to questions of migration and integration. We focus on changes in general intergroup evaluations

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and ethnic identification in both groups of participants.

Intergroup Evaluations and Threat

Studies on intergroup evaluations typically find ingroup favoritism: the ingroup is evaluated more positively than the outgroup (for reviews, see Brewer and Miller 1996; Hewstone et al. 2002). This does not mean, however, that all outgroups are evaluated similarly. It is possible, for example, that different ethnic outgroups enjoy varying degrees of social acceptance. Evidence exist in countries such as Canada, the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the Netherlands (for reviews see Hagendoorn 1995; Owen, Eisner, and McFaul 1981). In the latter country, several studies have found a hierarchy of preferences for ethnic groups among the ethnic Dutch (Hagendoorn and Hraha 1987; Kleinpenning 1993; Verkuyten and Kinket 2000). After the ingroup, the Dutch favor northern European immigrants most highly, followed by southern Europeans such as Spaniards, members of ex-colonial groups such as Surinamese and Antilleans and, finally, members of Islamic groups such as Moroccans and Turks. A similar hierarchy has been found among ethnic minority-group members (Verkuyten, Hagendoorn, and Masson 1996, also see Berry and Kalin 1979): Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese participants were found to favor their own ethnic group most highly, followed by the Dutch, then southern Europeans, and finally ex-colonial and Islamic groups.

Differential evaluation of ethnic outgroups has many possible reasons. For example, research (see Hagendoorn 1995) has shown the importance of negative stereotypes and the degree to which the ethnic outgroup has adapted to society, as well as the extent to which outgroups are perceived as threatening the ingroup's status and interests. Different theories support the centrality of perceived threat for understanding intergroup relations: for example, realistic conflict interpretations and group position models argue that the core of group conflict is the clash of interests and the related concerns about privileges and economic advantages (Blalock 1967; Harding 1995; Sherif 1967).

Studies have shown that perceived group threat as a result of the number of immigrants and economic concerns related to issues of immigration have affected the acceptance of ethnic outgroups in Europe (e.g., McLaren 2003; Quillian 1995) and the United States (e.g., Fosset and Kiecolt 1989; Taylor 1998).

Other theoretical approaches contend that people's acceptance of ethnic outgroups is governed not so much by competition for resources or self-interest as by concerns about the traditional values and norms that define their collective identity. Social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel and Turner 1986) emphasizes concerns about negative collective identities. According to SIT, the groups that people belong to or identify with are central to their self-understanding. Because people strive for a positive self-concept, they are motivated to evaluate their ingroup positively. Under identity-threatening circumstances, they will try to restore a positive and distinctive collective identity—for example, by increased ingroup favoritism. Identity issues have been found to underlie many ethnic conflicts around the world (Horowitz 2000). McLaren (2003), for example, in studying 17 European countries, found that a group's perceived threat to national and cultural identity was related to anti-immigrant attitudes.

Concerns about economic threats that immigrants may pose depend on economic circumstances. In relatively favorable conditions these concerns are low and thus exert little influence on evaluations of ethnic outgroups. Similarly, concerns about group identity depend on the perceived differences between ethnic groups and on the threat that those groups pose to a positive and distinctive ingroup identity. In studying exclusionary reactions to ethnic minorities in a representative sample of ethnically Dutch people, Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) found that considerations of national identity overshadowed those of economic concerns. In the Netherlands, economic conditions are relatively good, whereas cultural and religious differences and conflicts are core issues in public and political debates. These issues became more prominent in

2001–2003, with a shift from multiculturalism towards assimilationism.

Changing Political Context

Intergroup relations are not static. Some studies, for example, show that international conflicts such as World War II affected stereotypes of various national groups, such as the Chinese, Japanese, Germans, and Italians (see Oakes et al. 1994). Other studies have shown historical changes in white Americans racial stereotypes and prejudices (see Brown 1995; Dovidio and Gaertner 1986). Despite considerable debate about whether these positive historical changes are more apparent than real (e.g., Crosby, Bromley, and Saxe 1980; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts 1981), it is often claimed that the sociopolitical climate influences the expression of group evaluations and leads, for example, to contemporary or subtle forms of prejudice (for a review, see Brown 1995). Studies on historical changes, however, are not easy to interpret because of the many social, political, and economic differences between periods, as well as the differences in samples, methods, and measures (see Devine and Elliot 1995). In addition, these studies are concerned predominantly with white North Americans' evaluations of African Americans; They do not consider changes in the attitudes of different groups, especially in the context of multiple ethnicities (but see Duckitt and Mphuthing 1998; Hortaçsu 2000).

Using three measuring points (October–November 2001, 2002, and 2003) we focus on political changes in the Netherlands during a three-year period. This period was turbulent: major political changes involved the political arrival of the charismatic Pim Fortuyn as well as his murder just nine days before the general elections of May, 15, 2002 (see Pennings and Keman 2003; Van der Brug 2003; Van Praag 2003). According to political scientists Van Holsteyn, Irwin, and Den Ridder (2003:71), “No other party in the post-war period has challenged the established parties to the degree that the LPF [List Pim Fortuyn party] did, in fact shaking the very foundations of the Dutch political system to the

extent that politicians and observers began speaking of the new politics.”

In November 2001, Fortuyn became the party leader of the new antiestablishment party *Livable Netherlands* (LN). He gradually started to dominate the campaign; under his leadership LN began a remarkable climb in the polls, rising from two to four seats in the Dutch parliament to 15 to 20 seats in January 2002. However, after an interview with Fortuyn was published in one of the major national newspapers, the executive committee of LN removed their party leader. During the interview Fortuyn argued, among other things, that Islam was a backward religion and culture, that “the Netherlands is full”, and that the “strange constitutional law: thou shalt not discriminate” should be abolished. After the break with LN, Fortuyn decided to participate in the elections with his own party, the *List Pim Fortuyn* (LPF). The issues he raised continued to dominate the campaign, and as a newcomer he attracted much media attention. In their analysis of the media, Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2002:38) found that in the first months of 2002, Fortuyn received 42 percent of the media coverage about party leaders, and that “The LPF received a great deal of attention (18.0 percent) and thereby stands in third place,” among political parties.

Despite Fortuyn's murder, the LPF gained 26 of the 150 seats in Parliament in the May 2002 general election, thus becoming the second largest of the 10 parties in the newly elected Parliament.¹ After the elections, the LPF became part of the three-party coalition government. Because of internal tensions and open disagreements within the LPF, however, the government collapsed in 87 days, a record time. As a result, for the first time in more than 100 years, elections were held twice within a 10-month period. In the general elections of January 2003, the LPF lost heavily, retaining only eight parliamentary seats. The party did not become part of

¹ The fact that he did not attract even more votes probably was related to his flamboyant lifestyle and homosexuality. For example, on national television he spoke openly and in detail about his lovers and his sexual habits.

the new coalition government, and lost much of its attractiveness and popularity.

Fortuyn's ideology combined libertarian thinking, an aversion to established political parties and state interference, a belief in tough measures against crime, and strong opposition to the dominant view about immigration and the multicultural society. Fortuyn strongly disliked the ruling political elite, who (he argued) had no sense of ordinary citizens' problems and were unable to solve those problems. He presented himself as the only politician who listened and cared about "the people" and he used the populist slogan "It's up to you; it is me or them." According to Fortuyn, the established parties were unable to solve the problems of crime and immigration because they had shut themselves off completely from what ordinary people experienced every day. Fortuyn also used the slogan "I say what I think, and I think what I say" to attack what he called the yoke of political correctness and the problems this had caused with ethnic minority groups.

The voters had a clear perception of the LPF position on issues of crime, immigration, and the integration of minority groups. Using a representative sample, Van Holsteyn et al. (2003) showed that of all the political parties, the position of the LPF was perceived as clearest, and the respondents' agreement about his position was highest for any political party. A major reason was that the news was dominated by ethnic and crime issues, and "the LPF established itself in the eyes of the voter explicitly as a party with views on asylum seekers and integration, on criminality and lack of safety, and on [national] values" (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2002:52). The themes that Fortuyn put on the agenda dominated the news, and all of the parties were compelled to run their campaigns along these lines. In addition, many voters agreed with the importance of these issues. In October 2001, for example, the question of immigration and integration was ranked sixth in importance by all voters; in May 2002 it ranked third (Van Praag 2003).

Fortuyn explicitly rejected the idea of multiculturalism, pleading instead for assimilation and emphasizing national identity and pride. He argued that immigration and multiculturalism meant the abolishment of Dutch

identity. This position attracted many votes. Using logistic regression analysis and structural equation modeling, Van der Burg (2003) showed that the issue of immigration and integration was the strongest predictor of the LPF vote. For Fortuyn, the problems of a multicultural society were concerned mainly with Islam. He held a fiercely negative position on Islam, which he stated, was a backward religion that seriously threatened Dutch society and culture. He argued that "a cold war against Islam is unavoidable." In the media, Islam became symbol of problems related to ethnic minorities and immigration (see Ter Wal 2004). As a result, public discussion focused almost completely on Turks and Moroccans, and on the need to compel these two Islamic groups to assimilate. Other minority groups, such as ex-colonials, were hardly mentioned and were not presented as a threat to Dutch values and identity. Thus the emphasis on the Islamic Turks and Moroccans became stronger, though it was not new. In the Netherlands, these two groups are at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy; they have been paradigmatic examples of minority groups for a long time (Hagendoorn 1995; Verkuyten et al. 1996).

These political changes lead us to the prediction that the Dutch participants would show higher ingroup identification and ingroup evaluation in 2002 than in 2001 and 2003, and would be more negative about the Turks and Moroccans. In contrast, the evaluation of minority groups such as Surinamese and Antilleans was expected not to change much in this period.

In 2002, the Turkish participants faced the greatest threat to the value of their ingroup identity. Consequently we predicted that the public condemnation of Islam and the plea for assimilation would lead to stronger ingroup identification and higher ingroup evaluation among the Turks, as well as a more negative attitude towards the Dutch. For Turkish reactions to other minority groups, including the Moroccans, there were two possibilities (Rothgerber and Worchel 1997). One was that Turkish participants evaluated these groups more positively in 2002 than in the other two years: sharing a common predicament and "enemy" can lead to a stronger perception of similarity and to

greater attraction. This is not very likely, however, because in the Netherlands there is little evidence for the existence of a shared minority identity. In addition, Turks are quite negative about other minority groups, including the Moroccans (e.g., Verkuyten 1997).

The other, more likely possibility is that in 2002 the Turks were more negative about all other minority groups. Social identity theory argues that under identity-threatening circumstances, people will try to restore a positive and distinctive collective identity. A similarity in circumstances and position interferes with one's distinctiveness and increases the likelihood that other minority groups will function as comparison groups. Thus, to enhance the value and distinctiveness of their ingroup, group members will derogate other minority outgroups (Rothgerber and Worchel 1997). Under the political changes described, other ethnic minority groups may present a threat to the integrity of the Turkish ingroup struggling to develop a valuable and distinctive identity. This reasoning led us to predict that the Turkish participants would evaluate all minority outgroups more negatively in 2002 than in 2001 and 2003.

To summarize, we expected both the Dutch and the Turks to show higher ingroup identification and ingroup evaluation in 2002 than in 2001 and 2003. In addition, Dutch evaluations of the Islamic groups (Turks and Moroccans) were expected to be more negative in 2002 than in the other two years, whereas their evaluation of other ethnic minorities was not expected to differ much during this period. In contrast, the Turkish participants were expected to evaluate all ethnic outgroups, including the Dutch and the Moroccans, more negatively in 2002.

Furthermore, the effects of political changes on the group evaluations were expected to be moderated by the degree of identification with the ingroup. Research has suggested that threat does not affect intergroup attitudes uniformly, but mainly influences the perceptions and evaluations of high identifiers (e.g., Branscombe and Wann 1994; Ellemers et al. 2000; Grant and Brown 1995). When threat occurs, low identifiers tend to dissociate themselves from the negative image of the group, whereas high identifiers

tend to respond collectively by emphasizing the value of the ingroup.

METHOD

Participants

We used data from three studies that we conducted in October and November in 2001, 2002, and 2003 respectively. These cross-sectional data are appropriate for our questions because they were collected in the same months and at the same postsecondary schools in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. In addition, we gathered the three data sets using exactly the same questions on group identification and group evaluations.

The total number of participants across all three measuring points was 551. In 2001 the sample consisted of 104 ethnically Dutch participants and 105 students who described themselves as Turkish with a Turkish father and mother. In 2002 there were 249 participants, of whom 72 percent had a Dutch background and 28 percent had Turkish parents. In 2003 the sample contained 46 Dutch and 47 Turkish participants. Of the total sample, 39 percent were female and 61 percent were male. Participants were between 17 and 28 years old, with a mean age of 21.04. There were no gender or age differences ($p > .05$) between the Dutch and the Turkish group, nor any significant age and gender differences across the three measuring points. In addition and for all three data sets, the Turkish participants were born in the Netherlands or arrived there before age 5.

Measures

As measure of the general group evaluations, the participants were given the well-known "feeling thermometer." This device has been used successfully in various studies of both ethnic majority- and minority-group participants, including some in the Netherlands (e.g., Dijker 1987; Sears 1988; Verkuyten and De Wolf 2002). The scale is intended as a global measure of ingroup and outgroup attitudes; it displays good (test-retest) reliability and correlates highly with measures using several items, such as social distance scales and semantic differentials (e.g., Esses, Haddock, and Zanna 1993;

Haddock, Zanna, and Esses 1994; Stangor, Sullivan, and Ford 1991).

The instructions read: "Use the 'feeling-thermometer' to indicate whether you have positive or negative feelings about the following groups. You may mark any degree between 0 and 100. Marking 100 degrees indicates very positive or warm feelings, with zero degrees indicating very cold or negative feelings." Six groups were listed: Chinese, Turks, Surinamese, Dutch, Moroccans, and Antilleans. The instructions and the target groups as well as the order of their presentation were the same at all three study times.

Because we focused on Dutch and Turkish participants and were interested in the differential evaluation of Islamic and non-Islamic outgroups, we computed a summated score for the evaluation of the Chinese, Surinamese, and Antilleans. All three are visible minority groups that occupy similar socioeconomic positions and are accepted more fully in Dutch society than the Turks and the Moroccans. For the Dutch participants, Cronbach's alpha for these three target groups and for the three years was $> .73$; for the Turks, it was $> .71$.

We measured ethnic identification with four items that were adapted from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) and had been used in previous studies in the Netherlands (see Verkuyten 2005). The same items were used in all three years: "I am proud of being Turkish [Dutch]"; "Being Turkish [Dutch] is important to me"; "I feel good about being Turkish [Dutch]"; and "I often regret that I am Turkish [Dutch]." For these four items, we used five-point scales in 2001 and 2003, and a seven-point scale in 2002. Therefore standardized scores were computed for the items. In 2001, Cronbach's alpha for the four items was $.76$; in 2002, it was $.73$; and in 2003 it was $.65$.

In the 2003 sample only, additional questions were asked on perceptions of the quality of interethnic relations in the society during the three-year period. Using three questions and seven-point scales, we asked the participants to assess the extent to which these relations were characterized by (respectively) equality, mutual respect, and tensions. These three questions were asked three times: "before Pim Fortuyn became

popular" (2001), "during and directly after his popularity" (2002), and "now" (2003). For each period, the three questions were highly correlated ($> .62$). Thus for each year we computed a sum score in which a higher score indicated more negative interethnic relations.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

We used paired-sample tests to examine the 2003 participants' perception of interethnic relations during the three years. The mean score for perceived interethnic relations was 4.15 ($sd = 1.38$) in 2001, 5.41 ($sd = 1.30$) in 2002, and 4.82 ($sd = 1.24$) in 2003. The difference between 2002 and 2003 was significant, $t(93) = 7.06$, $p < .001$, as was the difference between 2001 and 2003, $t(93) = 4.22$, $p < .001$, and between 2002 and 2003, $t(93) = 4.96$, $p < .001$. Thus, as a reflection of the political changes, the interethnic relations were perceived to be most negative in 2002, followed by 2003. The least problematic relations were perceived as existing in 2001. We examined whether these perceptions differed between the Dutch and the Turkish participants and for the level of ethnic identification and found no significant differences. Dutch and Turkish participants as well as high and low identifiers perceived the changes in interethnic relations in a similar way.

Ethnic Identification

We examined ethnic identification as a dependent variable, using ANOVA. Ethnic group, year, and the interaction between ethnic group and year were included as independent factors. We found no significant interaction effect between ethnic group and year, but there was a significant main effect for ethnic group, $F(1,578) = 66.77$, $p < .001$. The Turkish participants showed higher ethnic identification than the Dutch participants ($M = 3.32$, $sd = .69$, and $M = 2.81$, $sd = .64$ respectively). In addition, we observed a main effect for year, $F(2, 578) = 17.21$, $p < .001$. Post hoc tests (Scheffe) showed that ethnic identification was significantly lower in 2001 ($M = 2.89$, $sd = .77$) than in 2002 ($M = 3.11$, $sd = .66$), and in 2003 ($M = 3.05$, $sd =$

.66). The difference between 2002 and 2003 was not significant. Hence, for both the Dutch and the Turkish group, ingroup identification became stronger in 2002 than in 2001.

Explaining Group Evaluations

In line with our predictions, we focused on the ingroup evaluation (Turks for the Turks, Dutch for the Dutch), the outgroup evaluation (Turks for the Dutch, Dutch for the Turks), the evaluation of the Moroccan outgroup, and the evaluations of the non-Islamic outgroups.

To examine differences in group evaluations between the Dutch and the Turks, between high and low ethnic identifiers, and for the three years, we conducted a repeated-measures MANOVA with the four group evaluations (ingroup, outgroup, Moroccans, and non-Islamic groups) as a repeated-measures factor. Ethnic group, year, and ethnic identification were the between-subjects factors. For ethnic identification we made a distinction between high and low ethnic identifiers, using a median split.

The analysis yielded a significant main effect for group evaluations, $F(3, 551) = 420.31, p < .001$. Participants evaluated their ingroup most positively ($M = 85.2$), followed by the non-Islamic groups ($M = 53.9$), their outgroup ($M = 50.8$), and finally the Moroccans ($M = 44.8$). This main effect, however, was qualified by an interaction effect between group evaluation and year, $F(6, 551) = 6.41, p < .001$. Simple main-effect analyses

indicated an effect for year for all four group evaluations (all $p < .001$).

The pattern of results shown in the top three rows in Table 1 indicates a change between 2001 and 2002. In general, in 2002 the ingroup evaluation became more positive and the outgroup evaluations more negative. For ingroup evaluation, outgroup evaluation, and the evaluation of non-Islamic outgroups, post hoc analyses indicated a significant difference between 2001 and two following years. In addition, in 2002 the outgroup evaluation ($M = 44.5$) was significantly more negative than in 2003 ($M = 52.2$).

The MANOVA yielded a further significant interaction effect between group evaluation and ethnic group, $F(3, 551) = 42.85, p < .001$. Simple main-effect analyses indicated significant ethnic group differences (all $p < .001$) for the three outgroup measures. Compared with the Turks, the Dutch registered lower mean scores for the evaluations of the Turkish (Dutch) outgroup and for the Moroccans, and a higher score for the evaluation of the non-Islamic outgroups. Thus, across the three years, the Dutch were significantly less positive towards the Turks ($M = 47.8$) than were the Turks towards the Dutch ($M = 56.0$), and also less positive towards the Moroccans ($M = 39.9$) than were the Turks ($M = 51.7$). The Turks, however, evaluated the non-Islamic outgroups ($M = 43.5$) more negatively than did the Dutch ($M = 58.7$).

Some of these effects, however, were qualified by a significant three-way interaction effect between group evaluation, year,

Table 1. Group Evaluations by Year and by Dutch and Turkish Participants, Mean Scores

Outgroups By Year	Group Evaluations			
	Ingroup	Outgroup	Moroccan Outgroup	Non-Islamic Outgroup
Total Sample				
2001	79.8	57.8	51.7	54.1
2002	83.7	44.5	37.7	48.4
2003	85.2	52.2	42.7	50.7
Dutch Participants				
2001	77.2	57.0	47.9	60.0
2002	83.7	42.5	35.4	58.6
2003	83.7	49.8	36.5	57.3
Turkish Participants				
2001	82.3	58.6	55.6	48.1
2002	83.5	52.4	46.7	38.2
2003	86.6	54.5	48.7	44.1

and ethnic group, $F(6, 551) = 2.94, p < .05$. Simple main-effects indicated significant interactions for ingroup evaluation, $F(2, 551) = 3.72, p < .05$, and for the evaluation of the non-Islamic groups, $F(2, 551) = 4.22, p < .05$. As shown in Table 1, for ingroup evaluation the Dutch recorded a significantly less positive mean score in 2001 ($M = 77.2$) than in 2002 and in 2003 (both years, $M = 83.7$). The Turkish participants also showed an increase across the three years (from $M = 82.3$ to $M = 86.6$), but this increase was not significant.

The results for the evaluation of the non-Islamic outgroups are shown in the last column in Table 1. For the Turks we found a clear decrease in 2002 (from $M = 48.1$ to $M = 38.2$), whereas for the Dutch we found no significant effect for year. Therefore, as expected, the Turks began to evaluate these ethnic outgroups more negatively in 2002, whereas the evaluation of the non-Islamic outgroups by the Dutch did not differ significantly over the three years.

The MANOVA also indicated a significant interaction effect between group evaluation and ethnic identification, $F(3, 551) = 13.25, p < .001$. Simple main-effect analyses showed that ethnic identification was related significantly only to ingroup evaluation, $F(1, 578) = 67.36, p < .001$. Participants with high ethnic identification were more positive about their ingroup ($M = 87.03$) than were low identifiers ($M = 77.6$). We observed no other significant (higher-order) interaction effects with identification.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine multiple group evaluations by ethnic majority-group (ethnically Dutch) and minority-group members (Turkish Dutch) during a turbulent political period in the Netherlands, one marked by the rapid rise and subsequent decline of a new-rightist populist movement. The analysis of cross-sectional data from three periods (2001 through 2003) showed clear changes in general evaluations of ethnic groups.

The charismatic leader of this movement took a fiercely negative position on Islam, defining it as a backward culture that seriously threatened Dutch identity and values.

Islam increasingly became a symbol of problems perceived to be related to ethnic minorities and immigration. Considering these political changes, we expected that the Dutch participants would evaluate the Islamic outgroups (Turks and Moroccans) more negatively in 2002 than in 2001 and 2003, whereas their evaluations of other ethnic minority groups were not expected to differ much during this period. In contrast, under the political changes, the majority group as well as other ethnic minority groups presented a threat to the integrity of the Turkish ingroup, which was struggling to develop a valued and distinctive identity. Therefore we expected the Turkish participants to evaluate all ethnic outgroups, including the Dutch and the Moroccans, more negatively in 2002. The results agreed with these expectations for the two groups of participants.

Another finding was that both the Dutch and the Turks showed higher ingroup evaluation and ingroup identification in 2002 than in 2001 and 2003. When threat occurs, people tend to respond collectively by emphasizing the value of the ingroup and the importance of ingroup membership. Furthermore, we found a more positive ingroup evaluation for participants with a relatively high degree of group identification. Low identifiers tend to dissociate themselves from a threatening or negative group image, whereas high identifiers are more strongly committed to their group and thus more likely to respond to threats by displaying ingroup favoritism (Ellemers et al. 2000).

Our results show that ethnic group evaluations are determined not only by individual characteristics, which are the focus of many studies, but also by the context surrounding the individual. The notion of context is addressed from different theoretical perspectives and is defined variously across social psychological paradigms (Deaux and Martin 2003). For example, context is taken to refer to the particular task or activity in which people are engaged, such as the comparative context for eliciting group evaluations or the public or private expression of those evaluations (see Oakes et al. 1994). The notion of context also is used for immediate social situations such as those in schools and neighborhoods (e.g., Taylor 1998; Verkuyten

and Kinket 2000). Further, the term context is used to refer to historical, political, social, and economic conditions. Here we have focused on status differences between ethnic groups and changing political circumstances. The findings suggest that social structural and political conditions influence people's attitudes towards ethnic in- and outgroups. These attitudes seem to reflect the realities of the intergroup situation, in combination with people's striving for a valued and distinctive identity.

Our results indicate the need for context-sensitive approaches to group relations, in addition to studies of more enduring and relatively stable individual differences. Social structural conditions as well as political arguments and debates can affect how people evaluate their group membership, the ethnic ingroup, and various outgroups. These arguments and debates never end but continue even as we write. The dramatic decline in popularity and votes for the LPF in 2003, for example, does not mean that the party's impact has vanished (Pennings and Keman 2003). From the perspective of the Islamic minority groups, the decline initially meant that the direct threat to their identity and culture had diminished considerably. The new right-wing government, however, has adopted many of the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim messages and policies of the LPF. In addition, local ethnic relations can be affected by developments in other parts of the world, such as those in the Middle East, as well as by global tensions and divergences between the Islamic and the Western world. For example, the Dutch participants' strongly negative evaluations of the Turks and Moroccans also may be due to the September 11 terrorist attacks. These attacks, however, cannot explain the changes found across the three years because all the data were collected after the attacks.

In evaluating the present results, some limitations should be considered. For example, we used cross-sectional data. Although the data were gathered at the same schools in all three years and the samples were similar in educational level, age, gender, and length of stay in the Netherlands, it is always possible that other sample differences are partly responsible for the changes found. In addition,

we considered only students from schools of higher education. It can be argued that they represent the future elites and therefore deserve special consideration. Yet, they do not constitute a random sample and do not represent the majority of the population. It is possible that the changes across the years and the differences found between the ethnic groups would be even more pronounced among less highly educated persons. Fortuyn presented himself as the only politician who cared for and listened to ordinary citizens, and he appeared regularly on popular TV shows. Furthermore, more highly educated citizens were less likely to vote for the LPF (Van der Burg 2003), and research consistently finds a negative relationship between educational level and prejudice (see Hagendoorn and Nekuee 1999). In addition, data from ethnic minority groups other than the Turks were unavailable. It would have been interesting to learn whether and how the attitudes of Surinamese, Antillean, and Chinese people changed across the three years.

Furthermore, some of the significant differences we found were not very strong. In particular, the results for ethnic identification indicate only a modest change between 2001 and 2002. In contrast, some of the changes in group evaluations were quite substantial. Ethnic identification may possess a more stable psychological meaning than group evaluations. Contextual factors play a central role in bringing a particular identity to the foreground of cognition, but may be less important for the more enduring psychological ties that bind the person to the ethnic group (Verkuyten 2005).

Finally, future studies could examine more closely the exact processes responsible for the changes we found. The present study provides no measure of perceived threat, which, we argued, changed over the three years and influenced intergroup relations. It is also possible, however, that Fortuyn and the media coverage merely made the ingroup-outgroup distinction more salient. According to self-categorization theory, for example, increased group salience forms a basis for intergroup differentiation (Oakes et al. 1994). Issues regarding immigrant minorities, however, have been present in the media

since the early 1990s, and references to their cultural and religious distinctiveness have been increasing over this period. In addition, Jetten, Spears, and Postmes (2004) found in their meta-analysis that perceived group distinctiveness tends to lead to group differentiation among low group identifiers. High identifiers tend to respond more on the basis of perceived threat; our results for ethnic identification seem more consistent with a "threat" interpretation.

Another possible explanation for our results is that changes in the normative context influenced the participants' evaluations. As stated earlier, Fortuyn argued against political correctness and the inability to say "what one thinks" about minority groups. Thus it is possible that the prejudiced beliefs which were always present were expressed more openly in 2002. Traditionally, the Netherlands displays a notable pattern: relatively low levels of blatant prejudice towards ethnic minorities and high levels of subtle prejudice (Jackson et al. 1998; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995). This explanation, however, cannot account for the changes in the responses of the Turkish-Dutch participants.

In conclusion, we have demonstrated that political changes and positions of the respective groups within the larger society are important determinants of ethnic relations. To our knowledge, very few studies have investigated multigroup reactions of majority and minority groups over time (but see Duckitt and Mphuthing 1998; Hortaçsu 2000). Furthermore, we have investigated two socially significant groups in a period of turbulent political change. Our findings indicate the importance of studying ethnic relations across time, in relation to political circumstances, from the perspective of both majority- and minority-group members, and in relation to different ethnic outgroups (see Bobo and Fox 2003). Our results also indicate that in Dutch society, which traditionally has been highly tolerant, ethnic relations have developed in a more negative direction, not so much because of concerns over economic interests as because of conflicting identities and values (Sniderman et al. 2004).

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